



PRE-EVENT VACCINATION PLAN

AN EXPLANATION OF THE THREE PHASES

In recent weeks, the North Dakota Department of Health has been participating with the rest of the nation in developing a smallpox vaccination plan. The plan is designed to address both pre-event and post-event vaccination. The activation of any part of the Smallpox Vaccination Plan is dependent upon a directive from the President of the United States.

The goal of the pre-event plan is to strengthen our ability to protect the public by having public health and hospital providers vaccinated and ready to respond quickly without fear for their personal safety. The pre-event plan is divided into three phases. Vaccination in all phases of the pre-event plan is totally voluntary.

Phase I

During Phase I, a core group of public health staff and a core group of healthcare providers in the acute care setting will be vaccinated. Public health staff would then be prepared to vaccinate larger numbers of people and to investigate and follow-up any suspected cases of smallpox. The healthcare staff would be ready to provide care to the first people who may present to a healthcare facility with smallpox. In North Dakota, public health units and hospitals are in the process of defining how many health care providers are needed to provide direct care for the first cases of smallpox. We anticipate that number to be about 2,000 people. Should an actual case of smallpox occur, other people exposed to the disease, as well as members of their households, would be vaccinated immediately as well.

Phase II

Phase II of the plan involves vaccinating all healthcare workers; first responders including EMS, fire department staff and law enforcement; and any others expected to participate in the management and execution of an emergency response plan. Family members of these groups also may be offered the vaccine so that emergency staff and hospital staff could provide care to the public without concern for their families. In North Dakota, Phase II could include as many as 30,000 people.

Phase III

During Phase III, smallpox vaccination will be offered to the general population.

Post-Event

The post-event plan would be implemented in the event of a terrorist attack involving the release of smallpox virus. This plan would include identifying contacts of cases and contacts of contacts for vaccination, as well as the groups identified in Phase I and Phase II of the pre-event plan. Mass vaccination of the public, regardless of exposure status, is also possible in the post-event situation.

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